

# TAO CHILD PROTECTION MATERIAL

## CONTENTS

- A Child Protection Policy
- B Organisational Requirements for Classes for Children
- C Child Protection Information for Instructors and Assistants
- D Guidelines for Instructors and Assistants.

## A. Child Protection Policy

### 1. TERMINOLOGY

In this document the terms *child* and *children* and *young people* all refer interchangeably to any person less than 18 years old.

### 2. INTRODUCTION

Participation in Chinese Martial Arts can and does provide valuable life experiences. Sporting activities offer significant opportunities for participants to develop social skills, self-esteem, confidence, teamwork and leadership qualities that develop a well-rounded individual.

The TAO acknowledges that despite all the benefits of participation, sport can provide easy access to children and present opportunities for an individual who wants to harm children. We accept that the welfare and safety of children and vulnerable adults is the responsibility of everyone involved in our organisation.

Most children and vulnerable adults are well cared for and have happy and trusting relationships with adults. However, some less fortunate can be vulnerable to neglect or abuse, whether physical, emotional or sexual. The abuse may occur in the home, at school, in the park or in the sporting environment. It is known that some perpetrators of abuse may actively seek employment or voluntary work with children in order to harm them.

### 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY

The protection of young people and vulnerable adults within the TAO is the responsibility of the Organisation and its instructors. Our approach to Child Protection is based on and reflects the principles of United Kingdom legislation and guidance and international agreements. The main tenets are that:

- The welfare of the young person is paramount
- All young people, regardless of their age, disability, gender, racial or ethnic origin, religious belief or sexual identity, have a right to protection from harm or abuse
- Inter-agency co-operation is vital if young people are to be truly protected

### 4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF INSTRUCTORS:

It is not the responsibility of an instructor to decide whether a young person is being or has been abused. It is their personal responsibility, however, to take action to protect a young person through following the prescribed procedures. Non-action is not an option in the protection of young people and they do have a duty to act. It is also their responsibility to ensure that only those who need to be informed are told and that confidentiality is respected at all times.

## **5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ORGANISATION:**

It is the responsibility of the TAO through the Committee to

- ensure that its Instructors are trained in procedures for dealing with allegations or legitimate suspicions of child abuse;
- implement such policies as seem best suited to ensure the prompt and proper handling of such situations;
- monitor its policy and practice and make improvements where practicable;
- arrange for 3 members to serve: one as Child Protection Officer and the others as Child Protection Assistants, and provide them with adequate training, resources and support;
- co-opt the Child Protection Officer onto the Committee.

## **6. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER (CPO)**

The CPO will be responsible for advising and guiding Instructors and Assistants in relation to child protection procedures and ensuring the reporting procedure above is properly observed.

The CPO will carry a mobile telephone designated only for use where there are concerns about child protection and this will be switched on at all times. When the CPO is not available calls will be diverted to one or other of the Child Protection Assistants so that a response is available at all times.

Where abuse or bullying is alleged against a member of the TAO the CPO will ensure that, where appropriate, the Organisation's internal complaints procedure is initiated and progressed through to a proper conclusion.

The CPO will monitor the performance of the Organisation's child protection and anti-bullying policies and will report regularly to the Committee including making recommendations for improvements where necessary.

# **B. Organisational Requirements for Classes for Children**

## **1. QUALIFICATION OF INSTRUCTORS**

The Instructor must have at least 1st Tengchi grade in the art they are teaching and have passed the BCCMA level 2 instructors' assessment. In addition they must have the express approval of the Technical Director for running a children's class.

## **2. ASSISTANCE**

The Instructor must have assistance from a member of the TAO at every class, or failing that a chaperone of the opposite gender. Ideally the assistant should have achieved a minimum of 3rd Pan and be of the opposite gender to the Instructor, however, where this is impractical, the Technical Director may authorise assistants with different qualifications, provided the welfare of children is not compromised. Ratios of adults to participants would be determined by considering age of the participants, the type of activity and where the activity is taking place. For club training and external events the TAO adopts the BCCMA's recommended ratios :

- for children between the ages of 5 and 12 years - a minimum ratio of 2 adults to 16 participants
- for children between the ages of 13 and 17 years - a minimum ratio of 2 adults to 20 participants

Any assistant must be familiar with their responsibilities under this policy.

## **3. CRB CHECKS**

Both the Instructor and their Assistant must have passed the enhanced CRB check.

#### **4. FIRST AID**

Either the Instructor or the Assistant must hold a current first aid certificate.

#### **5. INSURANCE**

The Instructor must hold the relevant insurance. No young person or vulnerable adult may participate in a class without current personal accident insurance.

#### **6. WRITTEN CONSENT AND INFORMATION FROM PARENTS**

No person under 16 years of age may participate without the written consent of an adult with parental responsibility. This will include authorisation to act *in loco parentis* in an emergency, relevant medical history and details of emergency contact numbers all of which should be kept to hand at every class. (See form provided in instructors pack)

#### **7. INFORMATION TO BE HELD IN CASE OF EMERGENCIES**

In addition to the information specified in the instructors' pack, those running classes for children should have the telephone number of the local social services and the local police to hand at every class.

#### **8. SPECIAL CONSENTS**

Specific written consent must be obtained from an adult with parental responsibility before children may be photographed, videoed or images of them may be published on the website or elsewhere in the Organisation's publications. Written consent must be obtained before a child is taken on any trip to participate in activities at a venue other than their regular training hall.

#### **9. RISK ASSESSMENT FOR TRIPS**

When planning health and safety measures for any proposed trip, the organisers must ensure that child protection issues are considered fully. (See forms provided in instructors pack)

#### **10. BEST PRACTICE**

Instructors will :

- inform participants of the Organisation's Child Protection and Anti-Bullying Policies in language they can understand;
- work to build relationships with young people which encourage them to have confidence to bring any concerns to either the Instructor or the Assistant without fear of victimisation or reprisal;
- avoid situations where an adult is alone with a single child wherever possible;
- ensure parents are aware of the Organisation's Policies, by directing them to the website.

### **C. Child Protection Information for Instructors and Assistants**

#### **1. UNDERSTANDING AND RECOGNISING ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

Abuse can and does occur in a wide range of settings, including sport. The effects of abuse can be so damaging, they may follow a person into adulthood. For example, a person who has been abused as a young person may find it difficult or impossible to maintain stable, trusting relationships, become involved with drugs, experience mental health problems or self-harm. A child who has been neglected can experience serious impairment in their health and development.

## **2. RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND EQUALITY**

It is possible that people from any racial group may experience harassment, discrimination and institutional racism. Although racism clearly causes harm, it is not itself a category of abuse. However, it may be considered emotional abuse and racism is illegal. Through adherence to the Taoist Arts Organisation Equal Opportunities Policy problems such as racial discrimination should be avoided.

## **3. PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY**

People with a disability or impairment may be vulnerable to abuse or poor practice, since they may not be suitably able to express their concerns or protect themselves or understand what is happening. Instructors must avoid discrimination against people with a disability and must be vigilant in caring for these vulnerable people.

## **4. ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

Somebody may abuse a child by inflicting harm or neglect them by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and vulnerable adults may be abused within their family, at school and sometimes in the sporting environment. There is growing evidence to suggest that peer abuse is an increasing concern for young people.

There are many forms of abuse –

### **Physical Abuse:**

Where someone

- physically hurts or injures a child intentionally by hitting, shaking, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, drowning or any other physical harm
- gives alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison to a child
- uses drugs to enhance performance or delay puberty
- inappropriately restricts a child's diet out of a desire to increase chances of success but without concern for the child's health and nutritional needs
- inflicts a type and intensity of training which exceeds the capacity of the child's maturation

### **Sexual Abuse**

Where adults or other children (male and female) sexually abuse boys or girls to satisfy their own sexual needs, or where children are encouraged or forced to observe or participate in any form of sexual activity.

This could include:

- full sexual intercourse, fondling, masturbation or oral sex
- taking or possessing inappropriate photographic materials involving children
- showing inappropriate, pornographic materials to children

It should be noted that in sports situations where physical contact is made i.e. in stretching exercises or supporting, sexual abuse may go unnoticed. These situations also provide the opportunity for abuse to occur.

The misuse of the power of the Instructor over young children or vulnerable adults may lead to abusive situations developing.

### **Abuse of Trust**

The Sexual Offences Amendment Act 2000 makes it an offence for an adult to have a sexual relationship with a person less than 18 years of age where the young person has a relationship of trust with the adult by virtue of their residential or educational circumstances. While the Act does not cover the relationship between a sports coach and participant in organisations other than schools, the TAO considers that this relationship is one of trust. It therefore requires:

- all members engaged in instructing or assisting in the training of young people to avoid any sexual relationship with participants under 18 or vulnerable adults;
- all those in the TAO to raise concerns about behaviour by those instructing or assisting in the training, which may be harmful to those in their care.

### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse can be described as the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child, which can cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. Examples of this may include when:

- the child is constantly shouted at, taunted, humiliated or ignored
- the child is subjected to constant criticism, name calling, sarcasm or bullying
- an unrealistic pressure to perform consistently to high expectations is placed upon the child by the coach, club officials or parents.

### **Neglect**

Failure of an adult to provide food, shelter and clothing for a child, or failure to protect a child from danger or physical harm, may constitute neglect. Failure to access appropriate medical care or provide love and affection may be classified as neglect.

Coaches who allow children to be exposed to unnecessary risk of injury or harm are being neglectful.

### **Bullying**

It is important to remember that severe cases of bullying may amount to abuse. The CPO will help Instructors decide on the appropriate procedures to adopt. (See TAO Anti- Bullying policy)

### **Poor Coaching Practice**

Poor practice may be defined as any action or behaviour that contravenes the following: best coaching practice as advocated in the most current version of the Taoist Arts Organisation Instructors' Manual;

- coaching guidelines as issued from time to time by the British Council for Chinese Martial Arts;
- the Taoist Arts Organisation Code of Conduct;
- the Taoist Arts Organisation Anti-Bullying Policy;
- the Taoist Arts Organisation Equal Opportunities Policy;
- the Taoist Arts Organisation Child Protection Policy

In its extreme form poor coaching practice may amount to abuse. Again if there is any doubt you should consult the CPO.

## **5. INDICATORS OF ABUSE**

Indications that a young person may be being abused can be difficult to recognise even for the experienced. There are signs, which could alert you to the fact that a child might be being abused, and these include:

- unexplained bruising or injury particularly in unusual places
- an injury for which the explanation seems to be inconsistent
- unexplained sudden changes in behaviour (i.e. withdrawing, very quiet, sudden outbursts of temper or emotion)
- inappropriate sexual awareness or language or engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- is prevented from socialising with other children or has difficulty making friends
- is distrustful of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected (i.e. parents, instructor, family friend)
- displays variations in eating patterns (i.e. overeating or loss of appetite)
- the child becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt
- something another child has said which suggests a child is being abused
- the child describes an act or behaviour that appears to be abusive

This list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of these symptoms is not proof that abuse has taken place, but it should raise concerns.

## **D. Guidelines for Instructors and Assistants**

These Guidelines for Instructors and Assistants has been developed not only protect young people but also to help them to identify practices which could be misinterpreted and perhaps lead to false allegations of abuse. All Instructors and Assistants should, therefore, follow this code.

### **1. IF A YOUNG PERSON TELLS YOU THAT THEY ARE BEING, OR HAVE BEEN, ABUSED**

Young people will occasionally disclose abuse to an adult that they have come to trust. If they do tell you, they are doing so in the hope that you will stop it happening, even if they ask you not to do anything with the information. It takes great courage to disclose abuse and your response can be crucial – it is important that you react appropriately.

#### **DO:**

- Remain calm and receptive
- Listen without interrupting
- Only ask questions if you need clarification – leading questions should not be asked as they may cause legal difficulties if the matter proceeds to Court
- Make it clear to the young person that you are taking them seriously
- Acknowledge their courage in telling you
- Tell them they are not responsible
- Let them know that you will do all that you can to help them

#### **DON'T:**

- Allow your shock or distaste to show
- Probe for more information
- Make assumptions or speculate
- Make negative comments about the abuser
- Make promises that you can't keep
- Agree to keep the information secret
- Begin counselling them

#### **YOU MUST:**

- Make an immediate record of what the young person has said, using their own words as much as possible
- Follow the procedures for reporting as below

### **2. IF YOU THINK THAT A YOUNG PERSON MAY BE AT RISK OF ABUSE, IS BEING OR HAS BEEN ABUSED**

- You must not wait nor must you investigate or seek additional information
- You should inform the young person of your concerns and the actions you will be taking
- Within the hour you should contact the Child Protection Officer on the dedicated telephone number to report your concerns.
- The Child Protection Officer will provide guidance as to the relevant agencies which are to be informed and if, for some reason, you are unable to inform those agencies, will be responsible for ensuring the information is promptly passed on.
- The Child Protection Officer will continue to provide appropriate support and guidance to you during the course of any investigation.